To: Christopher Williams
Subject: RE: Request from Dave
Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026 2:14:00 PM
Attachments: image004.png
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image007.png

Gang Suppression Team:

In early 2025, the department reestablished the Gang Suppression Team after years of inactivity caused by staffing and budget constraints, restoring a dedicated unit focused on intelligence-driven enforcement, gang violence reduction, and proactive firearm recovery. Since its return, the team has generated a substantial number of investigative cases and supported successful prosecutions through detailed court testimony. These efforts correspond with measurable public safety gains in Santa Maria. Shootings involving a discharged firearm dropped from 109 in 2022 to 104 in 2023, 85 in 2024, and 42 in 2025 — a 51% reduction in the past year alone and a sustained multi-year downward trend. At the same time, firearms recovered and booked as evidence increased dramatically from 107 in 2024 to 201 in 2025. The Gang Suppression Team has been a central driver of these outcomes and represents a significant operational success for the department.

Shootings (Firearm Discharged)

Year	Total	%Change
2022	109	n/a
2023	104	-5
2024	85	-18
2025	42	-51

Firearms Recovered (Booked as Evidence)

Year	Total
2022	127
2023	108
2024	107
2025	201

Professional Standards Unit:

The department also established a new Professional Standards Unit in 2025, creating a dedicated team responsible for strengthening accountability, transparency, and organizational excellence. This unit centralizes oversight of internal investigations and citizen complaints, ensures policies remain current and aligned with recognized best practices, and enhances the integrity of the department's recruitment, background investigations, and hiring processes. By formalizing these responsibilities under a specialized team, the department has improved consistency, fairness, and efficiency in how professional standards are maintained. The creation of this unit reinforces public trust in the Santa Maria Police Department and demonstrates a proactive commitment to ethical policing, modern governance, and continuous improvement, producing long-

term benefits for both the organization and the community it serves.

Automated License Plate Readers and Crime Reduction

The department's automated license plate reader program continues to demonstrate measurable success as a technology-driven crime reduction strategy and investigative tool. The system provides real-time intelligence that helps officers quickly identify stolen vehicles, locate suspects, and connect cases across jurisdictions, significantly improving response effectiveness and clearance rates. Its impact is reflected in sustained reductions in major crime categories across Santa Maria, with total Part 1 crimes falling from 3,863 in 2022 to 2,628 in 2025, a 32% reduction. The most dramatic improvement has been in motor vehicle theft, which declined from 1,158 incidents in 2022 to 376 in 2025 — a reduction of nearly 70%. These outcomes highlight how strategic investment in modern policing technology enhances public safety, supports data-driven deployment, and strengthens the department's ability to prevent and solve crime while serving the community more effectively.

Daniel Cohen
Division Commander
Santa Maria Police Department
(805)-928-3781 ext. 1234

From: Christopher Williams <cwilliams@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 11:59 AM
To: Daniel Cohen <dcohen@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: FW: Request from Dave

Can you work on this today and email me something that I can send in? I'm thinking we go with the reduction of shootings and the gun arrest stats. You can add more and I can pick two of them. Thanks.

Christopher Williams
Police Chief
Santa Maria Police Department
(805)-928-3781 ext. 2295
(805) 207-7234 (cell)

From: Chelsea Sperakos <csperakos@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 11:57 AM
To: Department Directors

<DepartmentDirectors@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: Request from Dave

Hello,

Per Dave, please submit to me a list of 2 achievements from your department over the last year. Deadline is Monday 8 AM. Thank you!

Chelsea Sperakos

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City of Santa Maria | 110 East Cook Street| Santa Maria, CA 93454
Telephone: (805) 925-0951 ext. 1685 | csperakos@cityofsantamaria.org

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